DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 482 436 SO 032 965

AUTHOR	Hoagland, Matthew A.
TITLE	Utilizing Constructivism in the History Classroom.
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	22p.
PUB TYPE	Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Classroom Techniques; *Constructivism (Learning); Educational Environment; High Schools; *History Instruction; Secondary Education; *Social Studies
IDENTIFIERS	Piaget (Jean); Vygotsky (Lev S)

ABSTRACT

When an adult outside the classroom learns history, it almost always begins with some connection or personal interest. The learning may be haphazard, but it will probably include movies, primary sources, trips to historical sites, and contacts with others with similar interests. The result is an understanding that is actively constructed, not just passively received. Among current approaches to teaching, constructivism most closely resembles the model used by adult learners. Applying constructivist concepts to the teaching of social studies can revolutionize the learning environment, and perhaps recapture the joy of learning that is central to human nature. This paper defines constructivism and explains the theories of the educators who elaborated on it, most importantly Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. The paper discusses the consequences of adopting constructivism in the classroom. It notes that some history subjects, such as world history, are so vast that they cannot possibly be covered completely. By focusing on relevancy and connections to modern issues, teachers can create criteria for deciding what is worth covering. The paper discusses obstacles and criticisms of constructivism. For example, it might not be a completely accurate theory of how people learn. Constructivism does not fit the current educational environment, with its push for objectivism and standardized tests. The paper includes examples of constructivist-style lessons for high school classrooms. It also describes the capstone project as a year-end activity. Contains a 20-item select bibliography. (BT)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 482 436

Matthew A. Hoagland

Professor Fred Risinger

Social Studies Practicum

Spring, 2000

Utilizing Constructivism in the History Classroom

Every year my high school holds an open house for parents to come and meet the teachers. As one would expect, parents talk to me about many issues. The theme I hear more than anything else is how much they enjoy and appreciate history now, but didn't when they were in high school. And they wish they could get their children to appreciate it as well. My pat answer has always been that it is hard to appreciate the lessons of history until you have lived through some. But in the back of my mind my explanation rang hollow. Increasingly, I have come to suspect that the problem is less with the students' lack of life experience than with how we teach history.

Consider how an adult outside the classroom learns history. It nearly always begins with some connection or personal interest, something that is relevant to their life. The adult (you and I) then looks for information on that subject. The search may be fairly haphazard. It will likely include books by a variety of historians, but rarely textbooks. The search will probably include movies, primary sources, trips to historical sites, and contact with others with similar interests. It may go in unexpected directions, following surprise leads. It will often lead to information that does not fit the original paradigm. The researcher may find sources that disagree and will have to make decisions about what to believe. The result is a richer understanding that is actively constructed,

SO 032 965

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M.A. Hoagland

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

not just passively received. History becomes the famous "argument without end." It becomes exciting and fun. It becomes an integral part of how we view and understand the world. It is also idiosyncratic, highly personal, and not easily subject to objective testing.

How different this process is from what happens in most classrooms, often including my own. Students are expected to learn the "right" answer to questions defined by higher authorities including the teacher. Memorization of "objective" data is the primary focus of most classroom activities. Even supposedly fun and interesting activities usually aim to transmit a narrow range of information to the students' memories. Most of that information will eventually be forgotten. But we hope, by inundating them through the course of a year (or less), that enough will remain to make them "historically literate." Students rarely get a chance to act like real historians, sifting contradictory information and making active interpretations. Is it any wonder history holds little excitement for young people? Their experience in high school is a far cry from what adults outside of class strictures think of as "studying" history.

Among current approaches to teaching, constructivism most closely resembles the model of learning adults follow. Applying constructivist concepts to the teaching of social studies can revolutionize the learning environment, and perhaps recapture the joy of learning that is central to human nature. As one constructivist said, "Constructivist classrooms operate on the premise that learning in school need not, and should not, be different from the many rich natural forms of learning that students have experienced before they entered the corridors of a school (Falk, 23)."

Constructivism

Constructivism is a psychological theory of how people learn. There are many schools of thought within constructivism, but all generally agree on the key point: individuals create new knowledge through the interaction of what they already know or believe with new ideas (Richardson, 3). The process of learning is highly individual and active. And the new understanding (knowledge) is very personal, varying from person to person. This view was popularized by Jean Piaget, but is really very old in Western thinking. Plato's allegory of the Cave developed the concept that our understanding of the world is internal, personal, and incomplete. Piaget and others have followed in Plato's footsteps, backing the concept up with scientific observation.

The great rival to constructivism is generally known as objectivism. Objectivists see the learner as essentially a passive receptacle for new knowledge. The human mind is viewed as a sponge absorbing information as it is presented. The knowledge absorbed by the learner is considered essentially an accurate portrait of reality. It is a pragmatic, scientific view of knowledge that fit well with the industrial revolution. Objectivism is very familiar to educators because it has dominated public education since the 1800s. Objectivist teaching methods focus on lectures and reading textbooks. Assessment is centered on "objective" tests with clearly defined right answers. Memorization is the key skill for success.

Adopting a constructivist viewpoint has tremendous consequences for educators. It changes the nature of knowledge, and revolutionizes the roles of teachers and students. Knowledge is now actively developed by students interacting with information. Answers are less clearly right or wrong. Teachers become facilitators or guides instead of the class

authority. Lectures give way to student research. The classroom becomes a much more active place.

There are many versions of constructivism that can alter educational approaches. Two in particular have had a considerable impact on educational theory. The first and oldest is generally known as radical constructivism. It comes directly from Piaget. Its focus is on the individual, where all learning is centered. Piaget saw real learning as happening when an individual came into contact with a new idea that was in conflict with previously held ideas. The "dissonance" between the two ideas forces the individual to actively reexamine their world-view and construct a new one (Scheurman a, 8). The key role of the teacher in radical constructivism is to promote analytical or scientific thinking by creating situations where students have to solve problems that challenge their current ways of thinking.

Another influential version of constructivism is generally known as social constructivism. It comes from the ideas of Lev Vygotsky, but has a lot in common with the ideas of John Dewey and many other socially conscious educators from the turn of the century. Social constructionists hold that the social context of learning is at least as important as what happens in the mind of an individual. By interacting with others we come to a public understanding and shared sense of what information is right and what is wrong (Scheurman a, 8). The construction of knowledge is a social act, leading to cultural variations in world views. With social constructionism, group interaction is key. The teacher interacts with the students to come to new understandings. Group work and class discussions are the critical activities in a classroom. It has generally been seen as more moderate that radical constructivism, fitting well with the teaching of democratic

concepts. It is also less controversial. Most of the ideas found in the rest of this paper adhere to the social constructivist approach, rather than radical constructivism.

Consequences of Adopting Constructivism

When an educator adopts a constructivist point of view, for a lesson or an entire course, it radically alters their approach to teaching. Properly planning and conducting constructivist approaches is considerably different than typical objectivist type lessons. They often require more effort to set up and plan. They also typically require more time to conduct. But the return on this investment can be considerable.

An important first step in the process is deciding whether the goals for a lesson really fit a constructivist approach. Not every goal can be met through constructivism. Lessons meant to transfer straightforward information aren't good subject matter for constructivism. But if the lesson focuses on higher order thinking and understanding a concept in greater depth, a constructivist approach can serve very well.

One of the key concepts in constructivism, from Jean Piaget, is the idea of dissonance. A powerful lesson can be based around the creation of dissonance, or friction, between what students think they know and new information. Not every constructivist lesson has to include explicit sources of dissonance, but this is a very useful technique. It is especially useful in shorter lessons that take one class period or less. The principal role for the teacher is to help students clarify and focus their prior knowledge on a subject, and then to provide information that challenges that prior knowledge. Lessons revolving around dissonance typically begin with a discussion or activity that the prior knowledge of the students to the forefront. Brainstorming and idea mapping are good techniques for this.

Then the teacher introduces the source(s) of dissonance. The source can be primary documents, historical writings, video clips, or any number of activities. As long as the sources challenge the students previously held notions to some degree, they can work as sources of dissonance. The sources do not have to actually contradict popularly held notions as much as stretch students' understanding of a piece of history. The lesson introduced below on Roman persecution of the Christians is an example of this type of approach. These short lessons can also serve as a springboard for more elaborate research projects.

The more freedom students are given the more closely lessons conform to the ideas of constructivism, particularly radical constructivism. Longer, more in-depth research projects give the broadest scope to individual learning. At the same time, they most challenge the idea that students all need to learn the same "right" answers on a subject. Creating effective lessons of this type is very challenging particularly because it is counter to so many deeply ingrained educational notions. It also requires considerable planning, and access to good research material.

As with the shorter type of lesson described above, a longer project is best started by clearly describing the subject and then finding out what the students already think they know about it. This can be done as a class brainstorm, by mapping in small groups, or even individually. This is an important step as it helps make explicit connections between what students already know and what they are about to learn. This is an essential aspect of the constructivist approach.

Once focused on the subject, students need access to good sources. Some of the best are primary sources. Others are articles and books by top historical and

archaeological researchers. Heavily edited sources such as textbooks and encyclopedias are only really good as starting points. They should not be relied upon because they leave too much out and give students little room for interpretation.

Access to good sources is often a problem. On their own, students will tend toward general sources that do little to challenge their thinking. Technology can help, but schools are unevenly equipped and access may be limited. But the creative teacher can do quite a bit on their own. I provide many sources in class through magazines and books that I have collected, often at second-hand sales. A useful tactic with magazines is to cut out articles on specific subjects and compile them in three-ring binders. The pages of the magazine can be inserted into protective plastic sleeves. This is especially useful when groups are working on different subjects. Each subject can have its own binder, readily accessible in class. The binders make it easy to add new articles as you find them. In a short time a teacher can compile a considerable library of good source material for students to use.

Primary sources are great material for constructivist lessons. Documents are easiest to get. There are many anthologies of primary sources available, usually related to specific topics. Others survey the sweep of human history. Two I use regularly are The Human Adventure edited by Eisen and Fuller, and Eyewitness to History, edited by Carey. Primary sources can also be found in a variety of history books and magazines. A teacher should be quick to develop a library of sources that could be useful for student research.

The Internet is problematic as a source for historical research. Many sites are not authoritative. Many are very general and no better (often worse) than encyclopedias.

Simply turning students loose on the Internet does not mean they will find the types of sources that are useful for constructivist lessons. It is often worth doing searches yourself, and compiling a list of useful sites for particular lessons. Though time consuming for the teacher, this can save considerable time during the lesson.

Perhaps the best way to accumulate sources is to teach students to identify quality sources, then require them to submit copies. This can be a great way to quickly develop a library of sources on topics you teach. And teaching students to identify good historical sources is a very useful lifeskill.

The means of assessment is also a key element of a good constructivist lesson. Indeed this may be one of the most important elements of any lesson. It is the key to identifying if real learning is taking place. It is also an area where many "student-centered" approaches fall down (Scheurman c, 23). The assessment method should require the student to show a deeper understanding of a subject than an objective test typically can. The best assessment methods require students to show what Scheurman calls "disciplined inquiry" into the subject, with a "command of the facts, vocabulary, concepts, and theories used" in the field of study (Scheurman c, 24). Essays are an obvious choice, but so are presentations, seminars and student-led discussions. Experts in a field show their command of the subject in a variety of ways. So should students.

A final component to consider is the connection between what is learned and the students wider life. Information learned purely in isolation is not very useful, and usually soon forgotten. No objective test can really establish connections for a student that make the material an integral part of their life. This is especially important for taking history beyond the level of trivia, and helps answer the annoying question: "why do I need to

know this." Whenever possible the teacher should strive to find connections between what is studied and the students' lives. This can be explicitly built into the lesson as part of the assessment. Or it might come as a discussion at the end. This aspect of a lesson can also help the teacher decide what is worth studying in a course. In my World History course, the potential subject is so vast that I cannot possibly cover it. And if I go into depth on some subjects, the situation just gets worse. But by focusing on relevancy and connections to modern issues, I can create criteria for deciding what is worth covering.

Obstacles and Criticisms

Constructivism is not a panacea. It has limitations, particularly in typical school settings. An honest appraisal of the shortcomings of constructivism is important if public school teachers are to effectively implement new ideas without wasting time and effort.

The first potential problem with constructivism is that it might not be a completely accurate theory of how people learn. The general outlines of constructivism were developed a century ago, and new research has cast some doubt on its basic principles. In particular, modern studies of brain function are producing a more scientific view of how learning takes place. The basic premise behind both constructivism and objectivism is that the brain is a learning machine, learning all types of things with the same mechanisms (and with similar ease). New studies of the brain indicate that different types of knowledge are learned by different parts of the brain in different ways. Some things seem to be "hardwired" into the brain, which dictates how that information is learned. The way young children learn grammar seems to fit this model. This means that some types of learning more closely follow the objectivist pattern than the

constructivist. Other, more complex types of knowledge are more likely to involve multiple parts of the brain, and more closely fit the constructivist model (Ridley, 320-323). The nature of the information you are trying to teach may decide the type of approach you take. New studies of brain function may one day revolutionize education.

A more immediate concern for the practical teacher is that constructivism does not fit the current educational environment in most schools. The push to conform to objectivism begins at the state level, with the focus on standardized tests. Teachers concerned about their students' future (and often their own) cannot afford to ignore these tests. Constructivism is not completely at odds with preparation for standardized tests, but the general push to memorize and review key (commonly tested) information tends to greatly limit its use.

At a more local level, the influence of objectivism remains in an emphasis on breadth versus depth. Administrators, parents, and other teachers often question a failure to cover a wide variety of information in any subject. The pressure, informal and formal, generally makes constructivist approaches interludes in a generally objectivist school year. They are "creative" or "affective" approaches. They are nice as a change of pace, but often not taken seriously as educational activities. The fact that many such "projects" are often not well planned or focused reinforces this generalization. Few projects make effective use of constructivist ideas but the association tends to color peoples' views of constructivism. Most schools remain wedded to transmission or objectivist models of teaching (Nelson, 9-10).

The school environment produces more difficulties in implementing constructivism. Most high schools are highly grade focused. But grading constructivist

products isn't always easy because student understanding of the material will be personal. Answers will vary from student to student. This can be difficult to handle in an equitable way while still demanding academic rigor (Richardson, 3-4). School structures include other obstacles to constructionism. Short class periods make it difficult to go deeply into a subject in a day. Fragmented class schedules fragment students' thinking in the course of a day. Departmentalization emphasizes the disparity between subjects, instead of their connections (Falk, 23-25). A teacher seriously adopting constructivist techniques will often be working alone.

Another obstacle to the use of constructivism comes from within the constructivist camp itself. Radical constructivism in particular has earned a reputation that makes many moderate educators very nervous. A common assertion of radical constructivism is that all knowledge is essentially equal, and thus equally valid from a psychological point of view. This assertion has been misapplied by many people with political agendas (generally but not always labeled left-wing) in an effort to attack traditional institutions and mainstream culture. Disciplined academic analysis gives way to questionable methods and more questionable conclusions. Forcing "right" answers on students becomes a form of cultural oppression. Radical constructivists have to some degree tied themselves to many controversial movements in education that put self-expression and self-esteem above academic performance (Crowther, 1-3). Though most constructivists aren't this subjective in their approach, the stereotype about constructivism remains (Scheurman c, 25).

Another problem in utilizing constructivism comes from the lack of material support for this approach. Textbooks are increasingly including primary sources, but in

very small amounts. A teacher will have to compile her own materials to carry out constructivist instruction. Students may or may not have access to the research materials needed to do the kinds of comparisons and deep analysis that is the essence of constructivism. The Internet is a mixed blessing as a source of information. Planning constructivist lessons is a real challenge for which most teachers are not prepared.

One of the biggest problems in the debate between objectivism and constructivism is the debate itself. Polarization in the educational community has tended to move many experts to one side or the other. The practical classroom teacher hears arguments that make it seem like they have to take a side. In reality, both approaches are useful in the classroom. Before exploring a subject in depth it is usually good to familiarize students with important basic information such as chronology, vocabulary, and geography. Objectivist approaches such as lecture can be an efficient way of teaching this information before students do research or work in a more constructivist manner. Combining approaches is probably going to serve the needs of teachers best, and provides greater variety of instruction. Classroom teachers need to avoid getting caught up in the debate between the experts, and instead make use of any technique that suits their needs.

What follows are several examples of constructionist-style lessons. They vary considerably in length and scope. Most conform more to the theories of social constructivism than to radical constructivism.

Roman policy toward the early Christians

This is a simple lesson that can stand alone or be a springboard for more in-depth coverage of the early Christian church. It is a good example of creating dissonance through the use of primary sources. Most students are familiar with the general concept of Roman persecution of the early Christians. The lesson shows the situation was somewhat more complex than most think.

Begin by brainstorming with the class on Roman treatment of early Christians. Examples would include "throwing Christians to the lions" and even the execution of Jesus. The teacher could also point out that St. Paul, the key apostle in the spread of the early church, is said to have been killed in Rome.

Then distribute the primary source document of an exchange of letters between the Emperor Trajan and Pliny the Younger. My source for these is from the resource materials from my textbook World History: Connections to Today (Ellis, Core Support Unit Two). It is also available in other primary sourcebooks. Have students read the letters and then discuss the attitude of these two important Romans toward persecution of the Christians. If you are not familiar with these letters, the general tone is that of reluctance rather than enthusiasm for killing Christians. Have students theorize why these two seem less than aggressive toward the early Christians. The letters help make students aware that the Roman attitude toward early Christianity was more complex than simple hatred and persecution. The teacher can then turn to the text or lectures to discuss Roman policy, or use this to start student research into the history of the early Church and its relationship to the Roman Empire.

Changing Forms in Art

Art is a great primary source for history classes. The visual impact is considerable, and it appeals to a different set of senses than text documents. Art often conveys tremendous amounts of information about a society. And interpretation of the meaning of art is very open and potentially creative. Art can be used in many ways in the classroom, including having students create it. This lesson focuses on changes in European art in the 1700s and 1800s. I use it as an introduction to the changes in society in this era of industrialization, democratization, and imperialism.

Art is not necessarily hard to get. The transparencies that come with most textbooks can be augmented with more made directly from art books. For this assignment, I use numerous pieces of art cut from old art books and magazines. I glue them to posterboard, each board covering a different period of history (and a different style). The first board begins with the baroque styles typical of the mid-1700s. Further boards illustrate the changes brought on by the French Revolution, Romanticism, and Realism. An alternative is to have students arrange individual pictures into stylistic groups.

We begin the lesson by discussing how art reflects characteristics of society. We also discuss what the students know of the various styles from the period. Then students are introduced to the paintings. I ask student groups to make a list or web of the characteristics of art in each period, and note any changes as they proceed to the next. Once all groups have gone over the pictures, we discuss their findings as a class. Finally, I ask the groups to theorize what historical changes might be reflected in the changing styles.

The lesson is a good introduction to art history of the period. It also reinforces what they are learning about the broader history of the period. Finally, it illustrates how art reflects changing attitudes in society. It is also useful for drawing in artistic students, especially those with a grounding in art history.

Using Primary Documents to Assess U.S. Policy

Textbooks tend to simplify complex issues to succinct statements of fact. Students generally treat these statements as unquestioned truth, especially if they fit commonly held assumptions. One example is coverage of U.S. entry into World War Two. The U.S. is often portrayed as a neutral victim of totalitarian aggression. This fits well with the general view of World War Two as a battle of good against evil. But was the reality that simple?

The textbook we use in my World History class has this to say about the build-up to Pearl Harbor:

> "When war broke out in Europe in 1939, the Japanese saw a chance to grab European possessions in Southeast Asia. The rich resources of the region, including oil, rubber and tin, would be of immense value in fighting the Chinese war.
>
> In 1940, Japan advanced into French Indochina and the Dutch East Indies. To stop Japanese aggression, the United States banned the sale to Japan of war materials, such as iron, steel and oil for airplanes. This move angered the Japanese.

Japan and the United States held talks to ease the growing tension. But extreme militarists such as General Tojo Hideki were gaining power in Japan. They did not want peace. Instead, they hoped to seize lands in Asia and the Pacific. The United States was interfering with their plans (Ellis, 797-98)."

The passage does not significantly differ with the generally held view that America was attacked while trying to avoid war. It is not necessarily wrong, but it gives a very simple view of American policy leading up to the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Historians writing about the period look to primary sources, particularly documents, to see what American policy actually was. A closer look shows a far more complicated situation than textbooks typically portray. And this more complex view is much more relevant for understanding the consequences of American foreign policy today.

This approach to the issue begins with an assessment of the students' knowledge of the period and their views on it. This is most easily done in a discussion format, where the class brainstorms a list of causes for World War Two, including American involvement. The discussion can include looking at the textbook's portrayal of the road to war.

Students are then assigned to groups (or they can work individually) to assess American foreign policy leading up to Pearl Harbor by studying primary documents. The most easily accessible are newspapers. Some newspapers are available on-line. Others are available on CD-ROMs. There are also some books available that include compilations of newspapers. I use World War Two Extra: An Around the World Newspaper History from the Treaty of Versailles to the Nuremberg Trials (see

bibliography for more details.). I photocopy relevant articles for the research groups. They can use these as sources, and as starting points for more research depending on the amount of time given to the assignment. Groups search the sources, looking for indications of American foreign policy in the years leading up to Pearl Harbor.

The groups report back to the class with their consensus on American policy leading up to the war. They have to have specific examples to back up their point of view. The overall class discussion is likely to range widely, but will give a far more complex view of the period. This is also a good time to review their earlier brainstorming session and the textbook, and see if they still agree with those assessments. Finally, the discussion can lead to a wider one on recent American foreign policy, particularly in dealing with aggressive nations (Iraq, Serbia, etc.). This can even lead to a new assignment and research project.

The Capstone Project

The end of the year often comes with a whimper in high school. Classes grind to a halt, and turn into review sessions. What should be the culmination of a year's study of history becomes an effort to memorize a list of trivial facts which will soon be forgotten. It's at this point in the course that students should be demonstrating their ability to use historical analysis. An assignment that is a much more authentic way of assessing students' mastery of historical concepts is the capstone (or culminating) project.

The capstone project is introduced by a brainstorming session, where students and the teacher compile a list of prominent issues and events making headlines today. In my World History class, some of the issues that come up are:

1. The search for peace in the Middle East

2. Global Warming and environmental problems

3. Intervention by the United Nations in world trouble spots

4. Religious and ethnic conflict in Eastern Europe

Obviously the list could be very long. A review of recent newspapers can yield a large number of issues to discuss.

The teacher now assigns an issue to each research group (or individual student). Their mission is to explore the issue from a historical perspective, and then suggest solutions or approaches to the problem/issue based on historical examples. The idea is for the students to operate as real political leaders and policy shapers. The teacher should stress how historical constraints tend to limit possible solutions. The students should demonstrate these historical limitations in their projects.

One of the most significant parts of the project is the requirement to research the historical background of the issue. Students should be required to use a variety of sources, especially primary documents such as newspapers. Part of the assessment of their research should include the requirement that their sources reflect a variety of perspectives on the issue. Thorough research will almost always show how complex issues are, and how difficult it is to implement idealist but simplistic solutions.

Another important part of the project is developing a series of possible solutions based on historical models. Students should be required to cite specific historical examples for their solutions, complete with research.

Projects can be presented in a variety of ways. Papers are an obvious choice, especially since they can accurately illustrate the level of research involved.

Presentations or class discussions are also an excellent way of informing the whole class on the issue. A combination of the two is typically best if time permits.

The capstone project is an excellent way of assessing student ability to utilize historical analysis and research. If given proper time and focus, it can lead to deeper understanding of important world issues and the difficulties of addressing them. History class rarely seems relevant to many students today. What better way to end the class than with a project that connects history to their lives today? Why leave with a whimper, when you can leave with a bang?

Conclusion

The debate among psychologists over the nature of learning has caused considerable confusion for teachers. As various schools argue, the implications of their theories spill over into education as new ideas (often not new but renamed). The practical classroom teacher, just wanting to know the best way to teach, is left confused. Many simply decide to stick with what is comfortable. A little common sense would help. It doesn't have to be objectivisim or constructivism. Both are useful, depending on the nature of the information students need to learn. In a subject as complex and open to interpretation as history, it is important that we make greater use of constructivism if we are to remain a relevant and vital part of the curriculum.

Select Bibliography

Alleman, Janet and Jere Brophy. "Assessment in a Social Constructivist Classroom." Social Education vol. 62, #1 (Jan 1998): 32-34.

Bower, Bert and Jim Lobdell. "Six Powerful Constructivist Strategies." Social Education vol. 62, #1 (Jan 1998): 6-9.

Caren, Eric C. World War Two Extra: An Around-the-World Newspaper History from the Treaty of Versailles to the Nuremberg Trials. Edison, NJ: Castle Books, 1999.

Carey, John Ed. Eyewitness to History. New York: Avon Books, 1987.

Crowther, David T. "The Constructivist Zone." Electronic Journal of Science Education. Vol. 2, no. 2, December 1997. Online. 8 March 2000.

Dettrick, Graham W. "Constructivist Teaching Strategies." Monash University, Churchill, Australia. Online. 17 March 2000.

Durant, Will. The Story of Philosophy. New York: Time Incorporated, 1962.

Eisen, Sydney and Maurice Filler Editors. The Human Adventure, volumes one and two. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1964.

Ellis, Elisabeth Gaynor and Anthony Esler. World History: Connections to Today. Upper Saddle Rive, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997.

Falk, Beverly. "Teaching the Way Children Learn." ." Teacher Learning: New Policies, New Practices. Ed.s Milbrey W. McLaughlin and Ida Oberman. New York: Teacher's College Press, 1996.

Gagnon, George W. Jr. and Michelle Collay. "Constructivist Learning Design." Online. 17 March 2000.

Jenkins, John M. Transforming High Schools: A Constructivist Agenda. Lancaster, Pa.: Technomic Publishing Co., Inc., 1996.

Kerka, Sandra. "Constructivism, Workplace Learning, and Vocational Education." ERIC digest #181, 1997. ERIC. Online. 16 February 2000.

Mayer-Smith, Jolie and Ian J. Mitchell. "Teaching about Constructivism: Using Approaches Informed by Constructivism." Constructivist Teacher Education: Building New Understandings. Virginia Richardson, ed. Washington, D.C.: The Falmer Press, 1997. Pages 129-151.

Nelson, Barbara Scott and James K. Hammmerman. "Reconceptualizing Teaching: Moving Toward the Creation of Intellectual Communities of Students, Teachers, and Teacher Educators." Teacher Learning: New Policies, New Practices. Ed.s Milbrey W. McLaughlin and Ida Oberman. New York: Teacher's College Press, 1996.

Richardson, Virginia, ed. Constructivist Teacher Education: Building New Understandings. Washington, D.C.: The Falmer Press, 1997.

Matt Ridley. The Red Queen. New York: Penguin Books, 1995.

Scheurman, Geoffrey. "From Behaviorist to Constructivist Teaching." Social Education vol. 62, #1 (Jan 1998): 6-9.

Scheurman, Geoffrey. "Revisiting Lexington Green." Social Education vol. 62, #1 (Jan 1998): 6-9.

Scheurman, Geoffrey and Fred M. Newmann. "Authentic Intellectual Work in Social Studies: Putting Performance before Pedagogy." Social Education vol. 62, #1 (Jan 1998): 23-25.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC®

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: Utilizing Constructivism in the History Classroom

Author(s): Matthew A. Hoagland

Corporate Source:

Publication Date:

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1 ☑

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A ☐

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B ☐

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, → please

Signature: Matthew A. Hoagland	Printed Name/Position/Title: Matthew A. Hoagland / Teacher
Organization/Address:	Telephone: / FAX:
	E-Mail Address: mhoaglan@mccsc.edu / Date: 11/20/2002

(over)

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

ERIC/CHESS
2805 E. Tenth Street, #120
Bloomington, IN 47408

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
4483-A Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706

Telephone: 301-552-4200
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-552-4700
e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov
WWW: http://ericfacility.org

EFF-088 (Rev. 2/2001)